

AUG 7 1972

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Rt. 8, 21201 8/7/72

Dear Mr. Bradlee,

If Arthur Marshall as spokesman for society and TV and the newspapers (to your slight credit less the Post) had decided in advance to give point to the one thing of which I have written you recently, they could not have done it better.

So far as what the people learned from coast-to-coast TV is concerned, it is no more that in the attempt on George Wallace, once again there is no conspiracy and no evidence of conspiracy. In fact, the note was of reassurance, don't worry about conspiracies for there are none.

The Post's coverage was good and generous. But the Post also knew that there was no question of conspiracy in any of the charges and none (from your own reporting) in any of the evidence. In a signed piece, without questioning, the Post reported Marshall's gratitude, carrying the word to the nation's most influential readership. It also noted that such questions had come up immediately. The net effect is to reassure that these questions were also answered.

Unfortunately, these identical questions remain. Two of the more glaring are where Bremer got and spent more than twice as much money as he could possibly have earned and the identities of those in whose company he was, definitely, placed during his manhunt.

There may be innocent answers. But without them such reassurance is a public disservice and not good journalism. In all the recent political assassinations (including even that of Malcolm X, whose bodyguard was a police agent) there are unanswered and reasonable questions bearing on conspiracy or absolute proof of it. I regret very much the encouragement to future conspiracies that can result.

On another subject, the Post yesterday reported a Republican statement of policy of opposition "to anyone using his connection with the Republican Party for an economic gain." Policy is opposed to practise in this administration in particular, which is and has been busily engaged in preparing for the campaign crunch, when it will, from the record of charges filed, allege crookedness to the Democrats alone. The Republicans, of course, selected those to be charged and ignored its own where it didn't make deals to exonerate them.

But this and the Eagleton flap focus on the vice presidency. Permit me a brief wind-up. With FDR there was Pala, with Eisenhower those bulls and tractor, even vicunas. But the press, to the best of my knowledge, has never looked into Nixon. With the Checkers speech for a text, too. He was so poor when he ran for vice president he had to take money under the table to run his office. And the first thing he did after election was to buy the Homer Cummings house on Forrest Lane in Spring Valley, for a reported \$50,000. (And now he is a multimillionaire.) I knew the Cummings<sup>es</sup> and their home and it couldn't be bought honestly for anything close to \$50,000.

I'd like to see some paper take the Checkers speech and the new statement of Republican policy as texts and do a simple but competent investigation and then report it. If the certified sanity of the one candidate of four for the nation's top offices can become the subject of a negative campaign in the papers, certainly the financial probity of one is the subject of legitimate interest and inquiry.

No answer required or expected.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg